given those figures. I concede that India is extremely vulnerable because it is placed between the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent. The hon. Member is quite right. There is a lot of activity on the Indo-Pak border; there was, rather. Now, with the fencing of the border, we think we have also the evidence to support this— smuggling has shifted to Jammu and Kashmir. There is activity in the North-East also. It is rather well known.

There is, of course, a link between narcotics traffic and terrorism. This is now a new area of studynarco-terrorism. I would not be able to give any details in the House, but clearly, there is a link between narcotics traffic and terrorism. We are vigilant on that and we will continue to be vigilant on that.

Sir, on the question of opium, it is now legal. It can be grown in India, under permission. I am sorry, I do not have the figures in regard to the acreage on which we have permitted opium to be grown, for the current year, and the production per acre. I would furnish these figures to the hon. Member during the course of this week.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 183. (*Interruptions*)

Cases pending before various courts in the country

*183. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government are aware that 25 million cases are still pending before the various courts in the country;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken (State-wise) so far for the expeditious disposal of cases so as to provide speedy and inexpensive justice to the common man indicating the States which have the highest/lowest pending cases; and

(c) whether the Central Government propose to call a joint meeting of Chief Justices of the High Courts of all the States to evolve some expeditious method to cut down arrears within the next two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPTT. OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPTT. AND DEPTT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes Sir, the Government is aware that approximately 25 million cases are pending.

(b) and (c) The Law Commissions and various Committee, have gone into the question of pendency in Courts. The Arears Committee, also known as Malimath Committee, submitted its report in this regard during 1991. Based on its recommendations, the problem of arrears in Courts was considered, to find ways and means to deal with it as expeditiously as possible in a Conference of the Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of the High Courts, held under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister during December 1993. Administration of Justice, below the High Court level being the primary responsibility of the State Government and High Courts, the Resolutions adopted in the Conference have been commended to all the State Governments/UT Administrations and the High Courts for necessary action. Progress of implementation in this regard is being reviewed from year to year in the Conference of Law Ministers, the last of such reviews was held in Hyderabad during November 1995.

2. In addition, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme has been introduced for providing infrastructural facilities for the Judiciary, which will supplement the resources of the States. The National Judicial Academy has been set up as a Central project with the CJI as the Chairman of

its Governing Council to provide training for Judicial Officers.

(c) Government would consider making recommendations to the Chief Justice of India, in this regard.

डा० महेश चन्द्र शर्मा: धन्यवाद सभापति महोदय। मंत्रीजी ने जो उत्तर दिया है वह उत्तर मेरे प्रश्न का पर्याप्त उत्तर नहीं है और स्थिति यह है कि न्याय में विलम्ब अपराधों को बढ़ाता है और जो जवाब दिया गया है वह 1991 से 1993 तक का है, वह लगभग ऐसा है कि ज्यों-ज्यों दवा की मर्ज़ बढ़ता चला गया। ये जो मुकदमें लम्बित हैं न्यायालयों में, इनमें घटोतरी नहीं हो रही है, ये बढ़ते चले जा रहे हैं और मंत्री महोदय कह रहे हैं कि 1991 में रिपोर्ट आई थी, मुख्य मंत्रियों की बैठक हो गई, वह राज्यों को दे दी गई। मान्यवर, मेरा सवाल था कि राज्यवार ब्यौरा दिया जाए कि इनके मुकदमों की सुनवाई करने के लिए क्या उपाय किए गए हैं? राज्यवार ब्यौरा इस उत्तर में नहीं दिया गया है। मान्यवर, शायद मुकदमे जल्दी सुलझें, इसकी व्यवस्था नहीं हो रही है पर अपने पूरक प्रश्न के माध्यम से मैं मंत्री जी से पूछता हूं कि कृपया हमारी जानकारी बढ़ाएं कि जो प्रथम अपील है, उसको सुलझाने में औसतन कितना समय हमारे देश में लगता है और इस सन्दर्भ में कृपया यह भी बताइए कि हमारे देश के न्यायालयों में सबसे पुराना लम्बित मुकदमा कौन सा और कहां है?

श्री रमाकांत डी० खलप: सभापति महोदय जिस प्रकार का प्रश्न पूछा गया, उसका ब्यौरा देना थोड़ा मुश्किल है क्योंकि हमारे देश में लगभग 25 मिलियन केसेज़ पड़े हुए हैं और हर केस की अगर जांच की जाए तो एक बहुत बड़ा काम होगा, बहुत मुश्किल काम होगा, ऐसा मुझे लगता है। फिर भी अगर आपको हर राज्य में कितने कैसेज़ पेंडिंग हैं, इसके बारे में कुछ जानकारी चाहिए तो वह जानकारी मैं दे सकता हूं।

श्री गोविन्दराम मिरी: इनको सुलझाने के लिए क्या किया है, यह मैं जानना चाहता हूं।

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP: Sir, I have got the statistics about the cases which are pending in different courts. Reference to the steps for disposal of such cases has also been made in the written reply. I may tell the House further that there are eleven different reports, which have been obtained by the Government for tackling this issue of arrears. We also have the Report of the Law Commission. Based on that, conferences of the Law Ministers and of the Chief Justices have made certain recommendations. These suggestions are before various courts and States. We all hope that the suggestions, which have been made from time to time, will be implemented so that the huge arrears of pending cases are reduced.

डा० महेश चन्द्र शर्मा: सर, सबसे बड़ा पुराना केस कौनसा है? मान्यवर, यह पहले का जवाब मुझे नहीं मिला है, दूसरा पूछता हूं।

श्री रामाकान्त डी० खलप: सर, इसके बारे में मैंने अभी कहा है कि इसके बारे में हमें रिसर्च करना पड़ेगी कि कौनसा केस देश के किस कोने में कब से और अब तक पेंडिंग पड़ा है।

डा० महेश चन्द्र शर्मा: मान्यवर, मेरा दूसरा प्रश्न है कि लंबित मुकदमों को सुलझाने के लिए कोई खास काम नहीं हो पा रहा है। सोचा था कि नई सरकार है, यह कुछ करेगी, लेकिन हमारे न्यायालयों में जैसे मुकदमों का विलंबन है वैसे ही एक बड़ी समस्या है भ्रष्टाचार की। न्यायालयों में भ्रष्टाचार को दूर करने के लिए हम किन किन उपायों को कर रहे हैं? और, आपने अपने जवाब में, जो लोक अदालतें हैं, उनका उल्लेख नहीं किया है। लोक अदालतों का शायद मुकदमों के निपटारे में एक महत्वपूर्ण योगदान है। तो क्या यह लोक-अदालतों का प्रयोग विफल हो गया है? यह मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगा और यह भी जानना चाहूंगा कि आज न्यायालयों में जो यह भ्रष्टाचार है उसको दूर करने के लिए सरकार क्या उपाय कर रही है?

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP: Sir, the first part of the question of the hon. Member does not come within the scope of the main question, because the question is only about pendency of various cases in the courts and the steps for disposal of these cases.

As regards the second part of his question, I must say Lok Adalats have proved successful. Lok Adalat movement has been very much appreciated by all sections of the community. The Government disires that this movement is further

strengthened. It should be taken to every district and every area of the country. It will definitely help in reducing the number of cases pending in our courts.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Sir, off and on there are statements by the Government that they will appoint special courts to dispose of all these cases, but nothing has been done so far. The other day the Law Minister made a statement that there are about 100 vacancies in the courts throughout the country. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any ban on filling up these vacancies? If so, for how long have these posts been lying vacant and what is the reaction of the Government to fill up these vacancies?

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP: Sir, once again, there are two parts in the question. The first part is whether we are appointing special courts. Sir, I will answer the question in totality. The question is: What are the different steps the Government is taking for solving the issue of arrears? For that purpose we have set up Lok Adalats. Secondly, we are trying to experiment upon the alternative dispute redressal system, for which this very House only yesterday passed the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill. In addition to that, special courts, tribunals etc. have been set up in different places in the country. Family courts have also been appointed. Special courts dealing with some special offences have also been created.

As regards vacancies, we have to look at the vacancies in two parts once again — vacancies in High Courts and vacancies in the subordinate judiciary. Sir, we do not have a very high percentage of vacancies. It is just about 10 per cent. There is no ban on filling up these vacancies. We are taking steps to fill up the vacancies. Vacancies in the High Courts can only be filled up on the recommendation of the Chief justice. So, whenever we get a recommendation from the Chief Justice of the High Court, we see to it that the recommendation is implemented immediately. So far as vacancies in the subordinate judiciary are concerned, it is for the State Governments to take steps to fill them up.

DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware as to how many persons are already dead within the last few years whose cases are still pending decisions before various courts in the country. I would also like to know from the Minister whether he has got any strategy as to how to cope with such a predicament.

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is not possible to answer such a query about the people who died and whose cases are still pending before various courts in the country for decisions. However, I can give details for the benefit of the House of the number of cases which are pending in the District and Subordinate Courts of India. The State of Maharashtra is leading over all the States with 39,00,000 cases, followed by Gujarat with 38,78,585 cases. Third in the list is Uttar Pradesh with 30,33,677 cases. Fourth in the list is Madhya Pradesh with 16,70,881 cases. Then, I can go on like this for the other States also.

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am trying to attract your attention.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But I am not attracted due to short of time.

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as far as the Chairman of the Cauvery Tribunal is concerned, he had resigned. So far no attempt has been made to appoint a Chairman in his place. I would like to know from the Minister what steps the Government would take to appoint a Chairman or reinstate the same person as Chairman of the Cauvery Tribunal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This question need not be answered. Q. No. 184.

Live Broadcast of Social, Political and Cultural Events in the Country

*184. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that apart from news reading, Doordarshan has no other regular means of live broadcast of social, political and cultural activities in the country; and

(b) if so, whether any steps would be taken by Government to broadcast other social events?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Very good answer, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Still have you any question?

SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Very good answer, but I have some clarifications.

I am putting my first supplementary. Just like our newspaper reporters who are very keen on investigative journalism, why can't Doordarshan depute some reporters in bulk in search of news instead of waiting for the news to come to their door-step and showing an attitude of the Government Department? They can investigate and collect details about current live issues like various scams and they can get the opinion of the people and leaders over it. The Doordarshan can even think of a serial on it so that views of various people may be publicised. Even politicians involved in the scams can find out where they failed, and the mistake can be corrected in future dealing. You can even think of sponsored shows. You should give more freedom to the reporters of the Doordarshan. At present Doordarshan has got the look of a Government Department. Will the Minister change it?

SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, when I first took over this Ministry, in the first review meeting itself, I have already discussed this subject with my officials. With regard to the coverage of the news by the Doordarshan, I had quoted one example to them. The election results would be going on coming, but the candidates who have already got elected would be on the streets with victory processions. In the meantime, the Doordarshan would be announcing that so and so candidate was leading by 10,000 votes and in some other constituency, counting was still going on. I have told them that this was not practical. My officials have told me that until and unless the Election Commission declares that so and so candidate is elected they cannot declare him as elected. I am just giving this example here.

The second thing which I have requested them is: to have a news collector at least at the district level; and he should be given well-equipped equipement so that he can pass on the information live to the centre directly. We are taking it up in our Ministry. I will see that whatever news is available is got as early as possible.

As regards what the hon. Member said about news searching, let us start with the district level. At least at the district level, I can have a news gatherer for Doordarshan. Now, as it is, we are depending on the PTI, the UNI and other news agencies. At some places, we have got our own network also. But it has not been extended throughout the country. We will try to extend this throughout the country and we will try to give news as early as possible.

SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: How is the international channel of Doordarshan doing? What was the object behind the establishment of such a channel? If it was for winning friends and influencing fore-